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Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /011 R

66645
DRAFTED BY: S/ S- O: JDLEE
APPROVED BY: S/ S- O: RWRIGHT
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R 032227 Z JUL 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
INFO CINCPAC
USSAG

S E C R E T STATE 130657

EXDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM PHNOM PENH JUL 3.

QUOTE PHNOM PENH 6679.

E. O. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CB
SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER IN TAM ON RECRUITMENT AND
OTHER MATTERS

1. SINCE WE HAD RECEIVED ONE OR TWO REPORTS OVER THE WEEKEND THAT IN TAM WAS AGAIN IN A DEPRESSED MOOD AND THINKING OF RESIGNING, I CALLED ON HIM AT MY REQUEST JULY 3 TO SEE HOW HE WAS BEARING UP AND TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF VOLUNTARY RECRUITMENT.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY DOWNHEARTED, BUT HE COMMENTED AT ONCE THAT HE WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE MILITARY SITUATION AND WAYS TO IMPROVE IT BEFORE AUGUST 15 AND THE PROBABLY TERMINATION OF US COMBAT AIR SUPPORT.

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3. SEIZING THE OPENING, I COMMENTED THAT THE MOST PRESSING CURRENT MILITARY PROBLEM IS THAT OF RECRUITMENT. I ASKED HIM IF HE HAD BEEN APPRIZED OF THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING HELD BETWEEN HIS MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF

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THE EMBASSY ON JUNE 29 (PHNOM PENH 6543, PARA 2 C),
AND HE REPLIED THAT THE PROPOSAL FOR A PAY BONUS FOR
INTERVENTION FORCES IS MOVING AHEAD EXPEDITIOUSLY. I
OBSERVED THAT IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE
TO THE POPULATION THAT FLAGRANT FANK PROFITEERS ARE BEING
BROUGHT TO JUSTICE AND TO INSPIRE THE POPULATION WITH
SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE IN THE REPUBLIC THAT THEY WOULD
WILLINGLY JOIN ITS ARMED FORCES. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS
LATTER IS ESSENTIALLY A POLITICAL FUNCTION AND THAT WE
FELT HE SHOULD TAKE PERSONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE RECRUITMENT
CAMPAIGN (I LEFT HIM WITH A LIST OF ACTIONS HE MIGHT
WISH TO CONSIDER IN PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN).

4. IN TAM THANKED ME FOR MY INTEREST AND COMMENTED
THAT HE HAD AS YET BEEN UNABLE TO REACH REAL UNDERSTANDING
WITH THE FANK CONCERNING RECRUITMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, HE
SAID THAT HE COULD NOT PUT HIMSELF IN THE POSITION OF
PLEADING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO JOIN FANK IF AFTER VERY
SLIPSHOD TRAINING THEY WERE TO BE SENT TO THE FRONT LINES
AS QTE CANNON FODDER UNQTE. I COMMENTED THAT THE OVER-
WHELMING NEED WAS PRECISELY FOR RECRUITS WHO AFTER A
PERIOD OF TRAINING WOULD BE SENT AS REPLACEMENTS TO
ACTIVE COMBAT UNITS, BUT I ADDED THAT I SAW NO REASON WHY
THESE LESS EXPERIENCED SOLDIERS SHOULD NOT BE HELD IN
RESERVE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

5. IN TAM SAID FURTHER THAT HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH
THE FANK HAVE NOT APPRECIABLY IMPROVED, AND HE CRITICIZED
MAJOR GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ FOR MAKING SPEECHES
IN WHICH HE ASSERTED THAT THE GKR WOULD FIGHT TO FINAL
VICTORY WHEN HE HIMSELF AS PRIME MINISTER WAS EMPHASIZING
THE NEED FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION; HE SAID THAT HE
BELIEVED SOSTHENE SHOULD CONFINE HIMSELF TO MILITARY
MATTERS. I REPLIED THAT IF RECRUITMENT IS TO WORK, THE CLOSEST SORT OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE CIVILIAN
GOVERNMENT AND THE FANK. I SAID THAT I AGREED THAT TALK
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OF FIGHTING TO FINAL VICTORY WAS OUT OF PLACE; INSTEAD,
THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FANK SHOULD BE MAKING THE POINTS
THAT THE FUTURE OF THE REPUBLIC IS IN GREAT DANGER AND
THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OTHER SIDE FOR A PEACEFUL
SETTLEMENT WOULD COME TO NAUGHT UNLESS THIS SIDE
IMPROVED ITS MILITARY POSTURE AND ITS POLITICAL COHESION.
I ALSO ASSURED IN TAM OF OUR STRONG CONTINUING SUPPORT
FOR HIS GOVERNMENT AND OUR READINESS TO DO WHATEVER WE
CAN TO PROMOTE BETTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN HIM AND
THE MILITARY. IN TAM APPEARED TO TAKE COMFORT FROM THIS
STATEMENT OF OUR SUPPORT.

6. CONCERNING MARSHAL LON NOL AND HIS HEALTH, THE
PRIME MINISTER STATED THAT HE HAD BEEN ADVISED THAT
THE MARSHAL HAD CANCELLED ALL HIS APPOINTMENTS FOR THREE AHSIYH#

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IN ORDER TO HAVE COMPLETE REST. HE SAID THAT HE
HAD
NO FURTHER WORD BUT ASSUMED THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A
SUDDEN RISE IN BLOOD PRESSURE NECESSITATING ABSOLUTE
REPOSE. HE SHOWED NO ALARM OVER THE SITUATION.

7. COMMENT. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE GULF BETWEEN KHMER
CIVILIANS AND KHMER MILITARY, WHICH HAS STEADILY GROWN
SINCE 1970, HAS EMERGED AS PERHAPS THE MAJOR OBSTACLE
TO THE UNIFIED ACTION WHICH IS NEEDED IF THE GKR IS TO
COPE WITH ITS NUMEROUS INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS. WE WILL
WORK VERY CLOSELY WITH BOTH SIDES IN THE HOPE THAT BETTER
COORDINATION AND SOME SPIRIT OF TOGETHERNESS CAN BE
REALIZED.
SWANK UNQUOTE RUSH

NOTE BY OC/ T: (#) AS RECEIVED.

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